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Faculty Senate Minutes - October 5, 2007

USM Faculty Senate

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Faculty Senate Meeting

Oct. 5, 2007

Union Hall of Honors

Minutes

Guest Speaker: Dr. Martha Saunders – reported on the following:

1. New health insurance for graduate students, half of fringe is out of USM budget.

2. Budget priorities – how are those set. The president is trying to find new models. Nothing, yet, has been changed. No lines have been swept. If something is missing from a budget, Dr. Saunders recommended talking to the appropriate dean. She indicated that she doesn't think USM will be getting much new money [from the state]. She stated her commitment to work harder to get private dollars. President's tithe is a model for redirecting funds, especially beyond budgets in individual colleges. She hopes that through the planning processes [beginning with core dialogues] new mechanisms for prioritizing the budget can be established.

3. Research and economic development – Dr. Burge reported to the president that USM and about $5.5 million ahead in grants and contracts awards from the same time last year. Burge is concerned that the large increase has outpaced the university's infrastructure

4. Student affairs – warning systems for threats. Dr. Paul has looked over proposals to increase communication and want to adopt a three-tiered approach. First would be a campus-wide public address system for instant voice announcements inside and outside buildings. Second, a cell-phone blast tech-messaging service. Third, television screens that could give emergency information. Questions remain as to how this will be funded and how quickly it could be operationalized.

5. Late application fee – [$100 for late student applicants] Enrollment management has been asked to provide a report. They report that late applicants tend to have very low retention rates and the fee discourages less-serious students. These data are considered preliminary and the issue of the late application fee is still under review.

6. Vice President for Advancement – the search committee has been appointed and will be meeting soon.

7. Campus dialogues – a number have been hosted and a considerable number of alumni have expressed an interest. A preliminary report is coming soon concerning major themes (diversity, technology). A final report will be available from facilitator and is expected in January. Dr. Saunders hopes to identify "energy areas" for USM and then structure the university planning committee and asked if the current planning committee structure should be used or if another committee should be placed for planning.

Senator David Beckett asked about the late enrollment fee for graduate students. Dr. Saunders said she consulted with the graduate student council and the results of that will be taken into account in the review of the late application fee.

Senator Tim Rehner asked for clarification of the role of the UPC in strategic planning. President Stephen Judd pointed out that the Faculty Senate is on record that the current UPC is not considered an acceptable mechanism for planning. Dr. Saunders said that USM needs a committee that everyone is comfortable with.

Senator Paula Smithka asked about the status of the Faculty Activity Report [FAR]. Associate Provost Bill Powell and Stephen Judd are working to assess what data are necessary to report to the [IHL] board. President Saunders said that FAR is under review. Senator Greg O'Brien reminded the Senate and President that the FAR should not be used for annual evaluations of faculty or in promotion and tenure decisions since it was not designed for this purpose.

Guest Speaker: Bobby Middlebrooks – updates on provost and deans searches.

Dr. Middlebrooks reported that the descriptions for provost and dean searches are being finalized, and the committees have all met.

Guest Speaker: Homer Coffman, CIO – reminded the faculty that his first goal is to meet technology needs of faculty and others. He reported the following about new developments at USM:

1. New Enterprise email system will be online in February 2008. The new system will include new optional features like desktop sharing and calendars. It also provides fax and voicemail to desktop which means individuals can access this information remotely.

Senator Larry Mead indicated that email is inundated by "spam" and asked what is being done about that. Coffman indicated that USM is blocking about 1.2 million emails each day. The blockage rate has gone from about 76% to 91% and will eventually block an additional one to two percent.

2. Coffman reported that we are going through a SOAR upgrade and the SOAR system will be down from Nov. 14 through Nov. 17. The new SOAR will have a different navigation system. iTech is working with LEC and looking to set up training for faculty about the upgrade. As a result, staff will be standing by during grade entry, including weekends to help with any problems.

3. Coffman reported that the network infrastructure at USM is changing, going from a 100 megabyte system to a 1gigabyte speed, and looking to reach 10 gig speed which will allow better collaboration between universities.

4. Coffman reported that a number of campus buildings are being rewired for a new convergence system which will include telephone, television cable and computer all to one cable. A grant was obtained to rewire the Chain Technology building, the Johnson Science Tower, Walker Science, the Thames building, and Owens-McQuagge. This means that faculty in these buildings will have access to higher speeds and better technology in these buildings.

Senator Tim Rehner asked if other buildings will be upgraded. Coffman reported that eventually all buildings will be upgraded.

5. Coffman reported that the university is in negotiation with Comcast to offer four internal TV channels and one community channel by the end of the year. This will mean that journalism students will have the ability to do live broadcasts.

6. Coffman reported that the software that many departments use for their websites is antiquated and no longer compatible with the latest versions of software coming out, and is not compatible with the standards that need to be in place for web access.

7. Coffman reported that there is an increase in security requirements for USM. There are many mandates from federal and state government that regulates networks. He suggested that universities are now the primary target for organized crime to take over machines and establish grounds of operation, for fishing expeditions or fraud/hack other areas. At present, 47% of all identity thefts occur at institutions of higher learning and federal mandates require higher security to protect against such activities.

8. Coffman reminded senators of the role of the iTech advisory council to help and protect faculty and the university and to set priorities for budget decisions for iTech.

9. Coffman said he is interested in removing the $10.00/credit hour fee for WebCT removed because currently the money generated from this does not go to iTech.

President-elect Steve Oshrin asked if there are plans to increase the number of smart classrooms on campus. Coffman responded that there were originally 48 smart classrooms and iTech are attempting to upgrade additional classrooms to include at least video projectors. Oshrin asked if there was a list to include classroom upgrades. Coffman responded that faculty could email iTech about this. Oshrin asked if there were plans to get a site license for the latest version of Dreamweaver for websites so that departments could afford access. Coffman responded that there was no reason that the university could not purchase a site license. iTech is also looking to provide upgrades for new Microsoft Office.

Senator Patsy Anderson asked about any planned upgrades for the Gulf Coast campuses, especially regarding upgrading internet access and speed. Coffman responded that internet speeds are about to be upgraded and are waiting to upgrade to 50 megabits/sec. and provide better computers for faculty on the coast.

1.0   Call to order- President Stephen Judd called the meeting to order.

2.0   Approval of September minutes – deferred to November meeting.

3.0   Approval of agenda – Report by Senator Anita Davis (Faculty Welfare – 5.6) moved up before President's report (4.1). Anita Davis moved to accept the amended agenda with a second by Amy Young. Motion passed.

4.0   Officers' Reports
    4.1   President – Stephen Judd

        4.1.1   Update on president's tithe – Deans have examined a number of models for redirecting funds in the university and suggested that the "tax" for replacement of faculty might be 5% which would generate about $300,000 each year [for the next three years] for the President to redirect. Judd reported that any "tax" was not likely to occur this year or the following year

        4.1.2   Update on search for VP for advancement- President Judd asked Dean Dave Davies, chair of the search committee to report. Davies reported that the search committee would be represented by Athletics, Alumni, the faculty, and the coast.   The search committee is expected to move quickly on this search. A consulting firm will be used.

        4.1.3   Update on tenure and promotion policies – President Judd reported that Dr. Saunders has asked that each unit or department provide a written document about expectations for promotion and tenure. Questions about these documents and when they might be implemented remain to be decided. Senator Rehner asked about the role of the Faculty Handbook and the handbook committee. Senator Beckett expressed concern from the faculty handbook committee about documents from individual units. Beckett and Rehner both expressed concern about the role of the deans and the faculty handbook committee in this process. Judd reminded senators that they should initiate regular meetings with their respective deans and that promotion and tenure concerns be brought up in these meetings.

        4.1.4   Update on late enrollment fee – (see comments by Dr. Saunders)

        4.1.5   Update on HPR – Judd reported that HPR is looking at the possibility for reorganization.

    4.2   President-Elect – Steve Oshrin

Oshrin reported on the iTech web committee that is addressing the USM website accessibility (Section 508 – Federal guidelines and standards for accessibility for individuals with handicaps). This committee is redesigning the recruitment and admissions sites to be more user-friendly. The graduate studies website will be redesigned as well. Many departments do not have the later versions of Dreamweaver to maintain and update their websites and the software that they use can no longer be supported by iTech and the university. Federal law outlines website accessibility and currently the university is not fully compliant. The latest versions of Dreamweaver have accessibility built in, but many departments cannot afford the upgrade.

Additionally more of our websites depend on streaming video. These sites, also, need to be handicap accessible and therefore captioned. Private companies who caption video are very expensive.

Standards for web browsers were also discussed in committee. Most of our users can be easily accommodated, but a few cannot. The committee voted to reduce the number of browser softwares supported by the USM website.

4.3　　　Secretary – Amy Young no report

4.4　　　Secretary-Elect – Stan Hauer

4.4.1　　Textbook costs report

5.0　　Committee Reports
　　　5.1　　Academic and Governance – no report
　　　5.2　　Administration and Faculty Evaluations – no report
　　　5.3　　Awards – Catherine Price, chair

The awards committee plans to reclaim the Headwae award from the office of the provost. Awards and deadlines are posted on the Provost webpage.
　　　5.4　　Budget – no report
　　　5.5　　Constitution and Bylaws – no report
　　　5.6　　Faculty Welfare – Anita Davis, chair

Senator Anita Davis provided a preliminary written report on the faculty survey conducted at the beginning of the semester. She indicated that there were some problems getting departments to complete the survey. She asked for feedback from faculty. She reported that faculty satisfaction varied by college. Davis reported that benefits [e.g., health insurance] seem to be a strong concern among some faculty. The final analysis should be posted on the Faculty Senate website.

　　　5.7　　Government Relations – no report
　　　5.8　　Technology – no report
　　　5.9　　Elections – no report
　　　5.10　　Other committee and liaison reports

　　　　　　5.10.1　Gulf Coast Faculty Council – no report

　　　　　　5.10.2　Facility Management Planning Committee – no report

　　　　　　5.10.3　Alternative Learning Committee – no report

　　　　　　5.10.4　Distance Education Committee – no report

　　　　　　5.10.5　Faculty Handbook Committee, David Beckett, chair – progress has been made on third-year review and grievance procedures for salary adjustments. These changes have been forwarded to the Provost.

　　　　　　5.10.6　Evaluation of Teaching – no report

　　　　　　5.10.7　AAUP – no report

5.10.8 Academic/Graduate Council - Graduate Council Resolution and update on graduate stipends. The Graduate Council (Dr. Art Kaul) has asked for endorsement from Faculty Senate recommending that the Office of Graduate Studies be changed [back] to The Graduate School with a dean rather than a director. Kaul moved that Faculty Senate endorse the Graduate Council resolution with second by Steve Bushhardt. Motion passed.

6.0   New Business

6.1 Staff Salaries Resolution – Motion from Senator Bob Press to recommend that Faculty Senate vote to pass resolution voting in support of increasing staff salaries. Secretary-elect asked if the motion might not be stronger if it came from Staff Council and endorsed by Faculty Senate. Motion to suspend rules in order to vote on the motion during October made by Pat Smith, second by Paula Smithka. The motion failed (17 to 16). The resolution may be reconsidered at the November meeting. Senators urged data concerning salaries and cost-of-living be included in the motion.

7.0   Old Business - none
8.0   Other - none
9.0   Adjournment: 4:35 pm

Members present or represented by proxy (in parentheses):

College of the Arts & Letters

Anita Davis

Cheryl Goggin

Stan Hauer

Stephen Judd

Art Kaul

John Meyer

Greg O'Brien

Bill Powell

Bob Press (Kyeonghi Baek, proxy)

Paula Smithka

Amy Young

College of Business

Stephen Bushardt

Mark Klinedinst (Stephen Bushhardt, proxy)

Scott Magruder

Catherine Price

College of Education & Psychology

Mary Ann Blackwell

Taralynn Hartsell (Amy Young, proxy)

Tony Rodriguez-Buckingham

John Rachal

Daniel Tingstrom

College of Health

Wendy Bounds

Trent Gould

Bonnie Harbaugh (Amy Young, proxy)

James McGuire (Steve Oshrin, proxy)

Steve Oshrin

Tim Rehner

College of Coastal Science

Chet Rakocinski (Don Redalje, proxy)

Don Redalje

College of Science & Technology

Jeff Evans

Jerry Griffith

John Hannon

Larry Mead

Bobby Middlebrooks

Barry Piazza (Myron Henry, proxy)

David Beckett

University Libraries

Jennifer Brannock

Jay Barton Spencer

USM-Gulf Coast

Patsy Anderson

Pat Smith

Gulf Coast Faculty Council

John Beedle

Guests

Dr. Martha Saunders

Dr. Bobby Middlebrooks

Dr. Bill Powell

Homer Coffman

Members Absent:

College of the Arts & Letters:

College of Business:

College of Education & Psychology:

College of Health:

College of Coastal Science:

College of Science & Technology:

Randy Buchanan

Gail Russell

University Libraries:

USM-Gulf Coast:

Julie Cwikla